



Mute

Piers Anthony

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Mute is science fantasy of mutation and psi: special mental powers. The protagonist, Knot, is a double mutant: He has a physical deformity, and the psi power to make others forget him. He's satisfied with his life—until the lovely Finesse walks into his life to recruit him for a dangerous galactic mission. She is aided by two small animal mutants: a telepathic weasel and a clairvoyant crab. Knot tries to resist, aided by his psi, but the woman's beauty and the animals' powers doom him to a phenomenal adventure.

The prior edition was cut; this is the complete version.

Mute Details

Date : Published July 1st 2014 by Open Road Media Sci-Fi & Fantasy (first published 1981)

ISBN :

Author : Piers Anthony

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Genre : Science Fiction, Fantasy, Fiction



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From Reader Review Mute for online ebook

Michel Clasquin-Johnson says

Acceptable space opera. But there's a problem right at the end. The hero gets sent forward in time to find out what the threat to the galaxy is, so it can be averted. But somehow he never gets sent back in time to deliver his message. Instead, he fights the enemy within to an unsatisfactory draw, then gets the girl and lives happy ever after in galactic chaos. Why set up such an elaborate time-travel scheme, then tell the rest of the story like a bad spy novel, with space ships and telepathic chickens?

Foxtower says

Excellent!

Dex says

my favorite book. I read it as a child so my taste was a bit different than now. It still has a fond place in my memory.

Krista says

I read this book for the first time perhaps twenty years ago. I thought it was quite good back then and when I was adding my favorites to Goodreads it went on the list. I'm not sure it deserves that distinction. In fact, I'm certain it does not because I have changed the rating from a 5 star to a 2 star.

When I first read this book I was fairly new to science fiction. The novelty of the genre made everything I picked up back then seem mind-blowing. I was also a bit less sensitive to sexist tropes. Things I find bothersome now clearly didn't annoy me back then because, if they had, I would have remembered how much of this novel is clearly a male masturbatory fantasy.

There are couple of reasons I say this.

First, the author's treatment of the women in this novel is rather juvenile. All the ladies want to have sex with our mutant hero, even if they fully understand they won't remember the night's pleasure due to his psychic mutation, which will erase him entirely from their short and long term memories. One is even disappointed she can't have his baby, even though he has to remind her of who he is every time they get separated or she awakens from a night's rest.

Umm...what? Try explaining that faux-immaculate conception to your kid when they're old enough to start asking questions.

Then there's Finesse, the CC agent assigned to him for the duration of his mission. She is forced to

"temporarily" divorce her husband and leave behind her child. This should be a huge obstacle but it's not. She's so in love with Knot that she's content to never see her beloved husband and child ever again. Sure, the author tries to rationalize her willingness to pretend that part of her life never happened, but it's ridiculous. As soon as she remembers her husband and child - especially her child! - there should be some major shifts in the plotting of this book. But Finesse isn't meant to be a fully developed and fleshed-out character. She's the fantasy obtained.

How did I miss all this the first time around? Well, I wasn't a mom when I first read this, so that might explain some of my willingness to buy what the author was trying to sell me.

Metaphorosis says

reviews.metaphorosis.com

3.5 stars

Knot is the (psychically) forgettable placement officer for a minimal-mutant enclave. Despite reservations, he's enlisted as an agent of the Central Coordination Computer to fight an unknown agent. With the help of other talented CCC agents - Finesse (human), Hermine (weasel) and Mit (crab), he is quickly involved in a desperate struggle for the galaxy's future.

When I was young, Piers Anthony was one of my favorite authors. I liked his philosophy, his concepts, and his (usually) extensive author's notes. I came across him when I picked up *The Source of Magic* at an airport and loved it. Over time, though, my interest lessened, as Anthony seemed to follow the Heinlein route away from good writing and into lechery.

Mute is from the early period, and I remember liking it. Reading it now, I was sorry to discover that it may not, after all, be Anthony that changed, but me. The story is engaging, the characters generally likable, the ideas inventive. I found the tone a little more direct than I recalled - Anthony sets up a moral or physical puzzle, then solves it, usually while staying strictly within the parameters he began with. The protagonist spends a great deal of time in introspective and critical self-examination, re-evaluating where needed. He's incredibly well-adjusted and self-aware, without descending into the pathos that some writers put him through. Sure, some of the science is shallow or gimmicky, but there's no pretense of hard SF here - it's about characters and morality, and Anthony presents it pretty well.

There's a pretty big gap in the middle of the book where Anthony just skips forward. I'm not sure whether he was bored, didn't find that part necessary, or just had too long a story on his hands - for the early 80s, this was a pretty sizable book.

Puns, good and bad, run throughout the book. Sometimes a bit forced, sometimes a bit funny. There's also quite a lot more sex here than I remember, though minimally described. Probably thrilling for the teenage me, but looking a lot like wish fulfillment now. It's not really objectionable, just highly unlikely, and leaning towards juvenile.

Where *Mute* falls weak - and falls pretty far - is in rampant sexism. When I was in my early teens, that didn't trouble me. The older, wiser me is less forgiving. *Mute* follows in the strong man, rescued woman tradition

of the pulps, but does it decades later, when SF was starting to know better. To be fair, there are strong, talented women. They're not weak and submissive, and they're not wise and all-powerful. They are, though, secondary; there's little doubt that, right or wrong, the man is the one in charge.

I found *Mute* to be more simplistic than I recalled, and a lot more sexist. It's still readable, but less so than I remember. I may go back to some other early Anthony to see whether they all follow the same style.

Ordinarily, I'd recommend this for YA readers - the simple style and direct grappling with moral issues head it that way. Unfortunately, that's exactly the wrong audience for ingrained sexism. So I'll say this - if you're a reasonably adult soft SF fan, you like puzzles, and you can pass over the (let's be generous) dated gender roles, you may enjoy this.

Barry says

Overall this was a good book. The story carried well, the characters were developed, and it kept me interested. It wasn't a book I couldn't put down, but it was far from being a book I didn't want to pick back up either. I read it a long time ago and glancing through it again has reminded me about it. There were a couple of parts I hadn't forgotten and I enjoyed reading it.

I also have to note that I did not read it five years before it was published. I have a copy of the original addition by Avon printed in 1981.

Anastacia says

Sucked

Janine Coleman says

I was lucky enough to have a friend in high school who first introduced me to Piers Anthony with this book. I immediately was taken with it- the entire world that Anthony seemingly effortlessly creates as well as focusing on the more unfortunate denizens on outlying planets that have been mutated in some way. Of course in typical science fiction, we are almost always introduced to a beautiful female- the wonderful part of this book is that she is flawed and instead of relying on being rescued by the main character, Knot, she ends up saving herself.

Mute, among other psi-powers, also deals with time travel of a sort and utilizing this in order to best rule the galaxy, as task set to the CCC, or Central Coordinating Computer. Knot is originally recruited by CCC to help defend it against an unknown enemy which will ultimately destroy the planet that the computer encompasses. Knot uses his own personal mutation, causing a person to forget him, as well as the aid of a clairvoyant crab and psychic weasel to try and achieve this goal. He ultimately fails, allowing for the destruction of the CCC, something that I rarely see in novels and appreciated greatly in this one.

This is a good book to get a sampling of what Piers Anthony can do with a great stand-alone story. This isn't serialized like his popular Xanth series or a part of a trilogy like some of his other works- yet this is a

wonderful introduction to Anthony's world of science fiction.

Erik says

Couldn't get through it, fizzled out near the end. Female characters weak

Jason Kittredge says

Reread this for the first time in years. Wasn't as good as I remembered. The plot was interesting, and it had been long enough that I forgot a lot of the details. Like many of Piers Anthony's books, I found that it had a unique perspective.

I recommend it for any Piers Anthony fan. The ending seemed a little abrupt, and was a bit disappointing.

Howard says

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Jenny T says

Started off good, but got very weird, very quickly. I loved the precognitive hermit crab, but the telepathic fleas and teleporting chickens were too much. I could detect early traces of Anthony's later Xanth series in the puns and the quest-like nature of the plot, but other than a few delicious moments, this book just wasn't very good at all.

Shalon Lippert says

This book was weird. I couldn't read the last chapter because i felt that, somehow, when i finished it would affect my brain in some lasting way. i felt like the book was taking over my brain, mesmerizing me. vivid.

Ranthium says

Great book overall, but best to not read the last chapter and make it up in your own mind.

Andy says

Even for Piers Anthony, whose work I like less and less as I get older, this is a really clumsy ready.
